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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/681,616	10/08/2003	Elizabeth M. Andrews	8179-90549	7277

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EXAMINER

HOEY, ALISSA L

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3765

DATE MAILED: 10/18/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

C

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/681,616	Applicant(s) ANDREWS, ELIZABETH M.	
	Examiner Alissa L. Hoey	Art Unit 3765	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 September 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5 and 7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5 and 7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This is in response to RCE received 09/22/05. After final amendment of 08/19/05 has been entered. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 have been amended, claims 4, 8 and 9 have been cancelled. Claims 1-3, 5 and 7 are rejected below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-3, 5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boersema (US 2002/0000003) in view of Ruth (US 2,424,056).

In regard to claims 1-5 and 7, Boersema provides a sock (10) article particularly capable for use in exercises with or without a mat and the exercise is capable of being yoga, pilates or stretching. The sock is made out of a natural, plastic or synthetic material (paragraph 0016). The sock (10) having a layer of rubbery substance on the bottom or sole of the sock which inherently has a sticky, soft, friction characteristics capable to grip a floor or mat when used by an exerciser (paragraph 0020). It is inherent that the gripping rubbery substance is non-slip. Further, Boersema teaches the gripping surface being generally

Art Unit: 3765

continuous extending across the sole and extending upward on the heel and on each side of the sock a short distance (figure 3).

However, Boersema fails to teach the sock having an open front end with webbings extending across the open front end from a top of the sock to a bottom sole of the sock to provide openings through which the toes of a user can extend. The toes are exposed out of the webbings for additional gripping functions on a floor or mat surface. Further, Boersema fails to teach the sock having four spaced part webbings extending across the open front end between the top of the sock to the bottom of the sole of the sock to provide five specific hole openings in the front end of the sock for receiving the toes of a wearer. Finally, Boersema fails to teach the rubbery substance being a closed cell PVC vinyl material or a vinyl sponge foam material and the thickness of the rubbery substance being between .065 and .025 inches or .125 inches.

At the time the invention was made, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have provided the rubbery substance being a closed cell PVC or vinyl sponge foam material because Applicant has not disclosed that the rubbery substance being a closed cell PVC or vinyl sponge foam material provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant's invention to perform equally well with the rubbery substance being a closed cell PVC or vinyl sponge foam material because as long as the rubbery substance is capable of providing a frictional grip between the floor and/or mat and the user's sock the rubbery

Art Unit: 3765

substance can be any appropriate rubbery substance and as supported in

Applicant's specification on page 3, lines 13-17.

At the time the invention was made, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have provided the thickness of the rubbery substance being between .065 and .25 inches or .125 inches because Applicant has not disclosed that the rubbery substance being between .065 and .25 inches or .125 inches provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant's invention to perform equally well with the rubbery substance being between .065 and .25. .125 inches or any other thickness as desired because as long as the rubbery substance provides gripping properties the thickness of the rubbery substance can be any. Therefore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify Boersema to obtain the invention as specified in claims 1 and 5.

Ruth provides a hosiery article (12) having an open front end (13) with webbings (15) extending across the open front end from a top of the sock to a bottom or sole of the sock to provide openings through which the toes of a user can extend (figures 1 and 3). The toes are exposed out of the webbings and are capable of providing additional gripping functions on a floor and/or mat surface. Further, Ruth teaches the hosiery article having four spaced apart webbings (15) extending across the open front end (13) between the top of the sock to the bottom of the sole of the sock to provide five specific hole openings (14) in the front end of the sock for receiving the toes of a wearer (figure 1).

Art Unit: 3765

It would have been obvious to have provided the sock with non-slip compositions of Boersema with the toeless hosiery of Ruth, since the sock of Boersema having a toeless end portion exposing the wearer's toe would allow the article to fit a wide range of foot sizes and will be less likely to develop holes in the foot portions due to the elimination of the toe regions which are subject to the greatest wear.

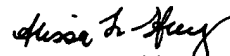
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alissa L. Hoey whose telephone number is (571) 272-4985. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:00-5:30) Second Friday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Calvert can be reached on (571) 272-4983. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3765

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Alissa L. Hoey
Primary Examiner
Technology Center 3700